

A music box appears ~~in~~ with the ~~a~~mail.

You find it wedged in your letterbox tightly. It's not packaged. The ~~ir~~e's not letter. There's nothing attached to it that has your name or address to say it was posted-. You don't know who sent it, what you're meant to do with it, or if it was even intended for you.

You decide you don't want to throw it away. If it belongs to ~~e~~ someone, the owner may come looking for it. Or maybe it really ~~really~~ is for you and you'll find out it's purpose in time. Whatever the case, you can't think of a reason to throw it away.

You take the box inside with the ~~p~~bills. You toss the envelopes on the kitchen table, where they lay disregarded while you sit down to inspect the box. You find ~~s~~no messages or inscriptions when you ~~t~~urne it over in your hands. Turning it over carefully in your hands, you re-examine it for any messages or inscriptions you may have overlooked at ~~f~~irst. You find nothing.

The box is both simple and exquisite. Its construction is not sophisticated, but elaborate symbols are carved around the border of the deep brown lid, reminiscent of characters in an archaic language.

Apart from these carvings, the box is un~~m~~arked.

Fixed into the bottom of the box is a golden wind-up key. You twist it with anticipation, eager to ~~t~~o discover how this box will transform its physical beauty into sound.

You wind up the key of the box, then put it back on top of the table. Your heartbeat accelerates and, ~~th~~rough your excitement is rising as fast as your pulse, you move slowly and carefully as if approaching a wild animal. You're afraid of startling it. In your hands is something extraordinary and you cannot risk ~~not~~ having this opportunity again.

Very gently, you ~~b~~rush your fingertips softly against the sides of the beautiful lid. They linger for a moment before you push it upwards.

But it doesn't move.

You ~~f~~rown. You try again. The lid doesn't budge.

You become furiously, unreasonably angry. After another horrible distressing minute or so trying to force the lid open without success, you stand up furiously, taking ~~n~~o notice of the chair that ~~c~~lutters to the floor behind you. You stamp over to the cutlery drawer to get a knife and when you return to the table you try to shove the blade into the crevice where the lid meets the body of the box.

The box doesn't like this.